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# Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2657

April 8, 1994

**COTTON GOES ELECTRONIC** -- Warehouses will soon be issuing electronic receipts in stead of paper receipts for cotton. USDA is instituting the change beginning May 2, 1994 under Congressional amendments to the United States Warehouse Act. The electronic receipts are fully negotiable and can be transferred from one holder to another through a provider approved by USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. **Contact: Robert Feist (202) 720-6789.**

**GETTING RESEARCH TO MARKET** -- Products based on USDA technology that use 100 percent vegetable oil to produce ink are about to enter the marketplace. USDA's Agricultural Research Service patented technology in 1992 that uses vegetable oils such as soybean, cottonseed, corn, and sunflower as a base for ink in newspapers. The vegetable oils have a high level of biodegradability, which means that newspapers printed with the ink will pose a substantially reduced environmental problem if disposed in a landfill. On average, 90 percent of the USDA vegetable ink degraded in 25 days, compared to only 22 percent degradability with a petroleum-based ink. **Contact: Sevim Erhan (309) 681-6531.**

**EXTENDING SHELF LIFE** -- Oranges and other citrus fruits will stay fresh up to three weeks at room temperature with a new coating developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ingredients of the coating have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The new coating also reduced the chance of off-flavors developing because it allows better gas exchange between the fruit and air. USDA's Agriculture Research Service is working with a manufacturing company in Florida to further develop the potential of the new coating. **Contact: Robert Hagenmaier (813) 293-4133.**

**BROILER EXPORTS** -- Reductions in international trade barriers and strong demand are expected to boost U.S. broiler exports to a record two billion pounds this year. The U.S. share of the world broiler market has risen sharply in recent years, reaching 38 percent in 1993. Emerging markets such as Poland, China, Iran, and nations of the former Soviet Union are contributing to export growth. **Contact: Lee Christensen (202) 219-0767.**

**BIOTECHNOLOGY** -- Scientists at 117 laboratories in Europe have embarked on a coordinated research program that they hope will propel plant biotechnology into the 21st century. The program is intended to help industry produce improved plants for agriculture. The areas of research include plant and biochemical genetics with an emphasis on producing environmentally friendly agriculture. Meanwhile, in the United States scientists and researchers are discussing potential partnerships among Federal agencies and the biotechnology industry to strengthen biotechnology research in agriculture, health care, the environment, energy production, and national economic competitiveness. **Contact: Marti Asner (703) 235-4419.**

**FUTURE COMPETITION** -- Since the fall of the Berlin Wall the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been looking to the European Union (EU) instead of the former Soviet Union for help in developing their economies. The EU has signed association agreements with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania. Membership will likely be offered within ten years. The farms in these countries are expected to be much larger than the EU's average 32 acres. The privatization process could result in the farmers having far greater incentive to produce than under current systems, and the farms are large enough to offer economies of scale that make them much more competitive. Building to that situation will likely be a drain on the EU budget, and a strain on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The effect on U.S. trade is unclear at this time. **Contact: Elizabeth Jones (202) 219-0620.**

**DIET SODA** -- The U.S. carbonated soft drink industry is the largest single commercial user of high-intensity sweeteners. U.S. soft drink consumption totaled 12 billion gallons in 1992, about 48 gallons per person, with diet soft drinks capturing 30 percent of the market. Aspartame is the leading sweetener for diet soft drinks. High intensity sweetener's share of the soft drink market has been declining recently. Nonalcoholic drinks containing natural ingredients without preservatives have gained consumer acceptance, such as tea and fruit juice. Some analysts believe that diet soft drinks are at a saturation point and will lose share to new-age beverages, good news for fruit and citrus growers. **Contact Fred Gray (202) 219-0888.**

**ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT** -- USDA has permanently revoked the license of a Kaukauna, Wisconsin animal dealer for violations of the Animal Welfare Act. The animal dealer failed to meet recordkeeping requirements, veterinary care, maintenance of facilities, and did not comply with an exercise requirement for dogs. The Animal Welfare Act requires that animal dealers, exhibitors, research facilities and transportation companies provide animals with care and treatment according to standards set by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Patricia Jensen, acting assistant secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services says the permanent revocation of the Wisconsin dealer's license is an example of USDA's increased efforts to prevent animal dealers from violating regulations. **Contact: Cynthia Eck (301) 436-5931.**

**STAYING HEALTHY** -- Vitamin C helps make healthy bones, gums and teeth, keeps blood vessels strong, heals cuts and scrapes, and fights infections. Good sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits, potatoes, tomatoes, strawberries, cabbage, watermelon, bell peppers, broccoli, okra, blackberries, blueberries and collards. **Contact: Dan Rahn (912) 681-5189.**

**LOWERING YOUR RISK** -- You can do something about the leading cause of death in the United States. The three main risk factors of heart disease are all well known, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and smoking. They are all controllable factors of one's life. A fourth factor is now recognized as contributing to heart disease, lack of exercise. Studies have shown that exercise strengthens the heart muscle, and can lead to less medication that is required to control blood pressure. Exercise should be brisk enough to raise the heart rate and depth of breathing, but not exhausting. Aerobic exercise of 20 to 40 minutes at least three times a week is recommended. **Contact: Holly Alley (912) 681-5639.**



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

### WEEKLY CASSETTE:

**AGRICULTURE USA #1922** -- Winter has stressed lawns and gardens. **Brenda Curtis** reports on ways to reduce the damage. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1404** -- Better weather warnings; mosquito test to begin; making meat safer; winterkill in your yard; snowmold on your lawn? (Weekly reel of 2 1/2 minute consumer features).

**AGRITAPE FEATURES #1914** -- Funding for levee repair; rural weather warnings; it's planting time, sort of; Espy putting emphasis on rural problems; predicting screwworm outbreaks; "bugging" insect's brains; tobacco outlook; details on wetlands reserve. (Weekly reel of features.)

### USDA RADIO NEWSLINE:

Wednesday, April 13, cotton and wool update, hog outlook; Thursday, April 14, feed update, oil crops update; Friday, April 15, milk production, GATT to be signed; Tuesday, April 19, crop and weather update; Wednesday, April 20, catfish processing, ag outlook summary; Thursday, April 21, dairy outlook, U.S. trade update; Friday, April 22, cattle on feed, livestock outlook, rice outlook. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

*Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.*

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- Environmental stories for upcoming "Earth Day" programming: **Pat O'Leary** reports on USDA's "We C.A.R.E." program to protect natural resources, and on conserving water at home; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on "green" products from USDA and Forest Service research.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** gives the long term weather and crop forecasts, plus a look at spring flooding possibilities.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on safe handling labels for meat and poultry; **Pat O'Leary** reports on new cotton products from USDA research.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT; Saturdays 10:00 a.m., EDT; Mondays 8:00 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**RESULTS OF HARD FREEZE...**last December and January are becoming apparent, says **Karl Guenther** (WKZO, Kalamazoo, MI). It was so cold that blueberry bushes were killed, and trees split in many peach orchards. Karl says vegetable planting is underway, cabbage and carrots usually go in first. The station has made programming changes. A half-hour farm program at noon was dropped, while the morning farm program was expanded to one hour.

**ITS DRY...**says **Mike LePort** (KRVN, Lexington, NE). Subsoil is in good shape, but March provided little moisture in the winter wheat areas. Water issues are in the news. They range from water allocations resulting from relicensing a dam, to a proposed plan that ties ground water use to the effects it makes on surface water quality. Mike says spring field work is mostly completed and producers are marking time, waiting for soil temperature to rise.

**NAFB'S WASHINGTON AG WATCH...**is April 16-19. Chairman **Randy Rasmussen** (KMA, Shenandoah, IA) says new items are meetings with a Japanese delegation and the World Bank.

### *Farm Broadcasters Letter*



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**CATTLE AND WHEAT PRODUCERS...**are facing a difficult spring, says **Bob Givens** (KGNC, Amarillo, TX). Cattle market conditions are down, and a local processing plant is threatened with a strike. The region is in a drought, and among the few items growing are wheat aphids.

**WORLD FOOD DEMAND...**and population growth were among the issues discussed at a recent Hudson Institute meeting covered by **Ron Powers** (WOWO, Ft. Wayne, IN). During Agriculture Week, Ron spoke to the Van Wert, OH, Rotary Club about agriculture's role in the region.

**SOME PRODUCERS...**could be facing disaster for the second year, says **Hal Hanna** (KXEL, Waterloo, IA). 250,000 acres cannot be planted this year because of flood damage, and another 50,000 acres along rivers will not be planted. But those who can plant have an optimistic attitude. Hal reports that he has bought a puppy. Says he may call it Beaver. Because it chews everything in sight.

**VIC POWELL**  
Office of Communications